



# Well at Work

## Champaign County Worksite Wellness Newsletter

Champaign-Urbana Public Health District

March 2014

### Champaign County Worksites Get Creative with Health Activities



Parkland College gave flowers to their February Amazing Challenge winners.

There are lots of ways to incorporate healthy habits into the work day. Employers all across Champaign County use creative methods to help their employees keep fit and eat right. What follows are some ideas we've gathered from local employers.

#### Use the Resources You Already Have

Parkland Community College gives employees free access to their workout facilities and classes, as well as their nutritious cooking classes, through their community education program. The Urbana Park District offers a similar benefit to their employees, who can participate in the Park District's wellness activities for free.

Even if you don't have a gym in your building, you can think of imaginative ways to use the facilities

you have—such as decorating a stairwell to encourage employees to use it for exercise. Frasca International utilized their warehouse space for employee wellness by painting an indoor track for walking during their breaks.

#### Assess Your Current Practices

Champaign County gave their employees an opportunity to have a voice in their wellness through a survey of the worksite. The survey gathered information on the health concerns of employees and what changes they were willing to make to improve their health. With this information in hand, their labor-management committee has started planning health initiatives.

A number of other local employers conduct employee health surveys as

well. Surveys are a great way to begin a worksite wellness program, or to get feedback on a program that is already in place. It is recommended that worksites conduct health surveys once a year, and that results be shared with employees.

#### Have Wellness Champions

Teachers at Carrie-Busey Elementary School have been physically active at work, in large part due to the school's P.E. teacher Wendy Starwalt. Wendy is passionate about improving the health of her coworkers, her students, and their families. She has led workout classes for the staff after school, as well as discussions about health. To kick off the Amazing Challenge, Wendy gathered her coworkers for a discussion about healthy eating, and exercises to improve strength and balance. For extra motivation,

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### The Amazing Challenge: Sign Up Today!

The Amazing Challenge, a state-wide four-month worksite wellness challenge, began on February 1st. The challenge, which is sponsored by the Illinois Department of Public Health, promotes employee wellness in a fun and convenient way.



The Amazing Challenge aims to inspire employees to make healthier choices in physical activity, nutrition, and life balance. Participants are guided to take simple daily steps to improve their health. The challenge is organized through a website portal. Employees log in to the portal to record

their activities and get ideas for healthy recipes and exercise. As employees participate in each challenges, like eating a whole grain every day, they earn points.

#### How can I join?

There are four easy steps to join the challenge.

**Step 1:** Contact C-UPHD to sign up. The entry fee is \$6.00 per person, but C-UPHD has grant funding that

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## C-UPHD and Urbana Park District Partner to Make Fitness Convenient

Here at the Champaign-Urbana Public Health District, we keep making changes to improve our staff's health!

A few years ago, we traded our vending machines full of chips and candy for a snack shop called The Cove. The Cove is in a former closet that we turned into a healthy vending store, with snack options like nuts and fresh fruit. We added a fridge where we store healthy snacks like hummus and low-fat milk. We charge less for healthy snacks, and more for options that are less healthy. Our employees pay for snacks based on the honor system. We survey employees for food ideas, and we've

received feedback that the Cove has even improved the eating habits of some staff when they are away from work!

This January, we formed a partnership with the Urbana Park District. A C-UPHD dietitian offered a workshop for Park District staff on eating healthy at work, and UPD fitness coordinator Mike Iorio taught a fitness class every Friday during the C-UPHD lunch hour. A lunch workout in our conference room was a convenient way to incorporate exercise into our daily routine!

C-UPHD has participated in other campaigns and programs to encourage a healthi-

er lifestyle. In January, we participated in Illinois' Re-think Your Drink month, where people were encouraged to cut sugary beverages out of their diet. Almost 50% of the average American's excess calorie consumption is a result of drinking sugary beverages. At C-UPHD, we challenged every employee to drink only water or low-fat milk for an entire day. If someone took the challenge, they earned \$1 in "Cove bucks."

We have also created a number of teams for the Amazing Challenge (see page 1). We've been having fun competing with each other on the wellness challenges.



CUPHD Staff flex with Mike Iorio from the Urbana Park District.

## Bike to Work Day: Dust off Your Bike for May 15th!

Bike to Work Day will be on May 15th this year in Champaign-Urbana. Active transportation like biking is both eco-friendly and beneficial to employees' health. Bike to Work Day encourages employees to be physically active as they commute.

As in past years, BTW stations will be set up around Champaign-Urbana, with incentives for bicyclers to celebrate fitting activity into their day.

If employees are worried

about sweating on their way to work, they can bring a change of clothes with them. Rinse their faces and hands in the bathroom, or use disposable moist towelettes, and they'll be refreshed and ready to begin their day.

If your coworkers are concerned they're too out of shape to bike, they can leave early and ride at an easy pace. Or if they live far away, they can drive to a coworkers' house and bike from

there. And often commuting trips of less than three miles are quicker by bike than by car!

Champaign County has many bike-friendly roads and pathways. For ideas on a bike-friendly route to work, bicycle maps are available at:

[urbanaininois.us/bicycle-maps](http://urbanaininois.us/bicycle-maps)

Register for BTW day and get a free t-shirt at:

[www.cubike.org](http://www.cubike.org)



UIUC students collected 22 pounds of tobacco litter during a two-hour period in April 2013. An expected result of the campus becoming smoke-free is a significant reduction in tobacco litter.

## Breathe Easy: Tobacco-free Workplaces

As of January 1, 2014, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign became a tobacco-free campus. Smoking is prohibited on all campus properties, including privately owned vehicles. The purpose of this policy is to provide a healthier environment and to minimize the negative effects of secondhand smoke for staff and students.

Choosing to have a smoke-free policy at the workplace is beneficial for both the employer and employees. Employer health care costs may be reduced due to improved employee health, employee attendance may improve when individuals take less sick days for tobacco-related illnesses, and the organization may have less maintenance costs as a result of reducing cigarette litter.

Nonsmoking employees appreciate breathing clean air in a smoke-free workplace, and smokers may cut back or even quit. Smoke-free policies have been shown to reduce tobacco use at work by approximately 29%.

Overall, workplaces are safer and healthier with smoke-free policies. Go smoke-free today! C-UPHD has resources to assist you.

## Eating Better on a Budget

Eating healthy can get expensive if you aren't planning ahead. Use some of these tips to help you save cash while eating right!

**1. Plan! Plan! Plan!** Before you head to the grocery store, plan your meals for the week. Include meals like stews, casseroles, or stir-fries, which "stretch" expensive items into more portions. Check to see what foods you already have and make a list for what you need to buy.

**2. Get the Best Price:** Check the local newspaper, online, and at the store for sales and coupons. Ask about a loyalty card for extra savings at stores where you shop. Look for specials or sales on meat and seafood—often the most expensive items on your list.

**3. Compare and Contrast:** Locate the "Unit Price" on the shelf directly below the product. Use it to compare different brands and different sizes of the same brand to determine which is more economical.

**4. Buy in Bulk:** It is almost always cheaper to buy foods in bulk. Smart choices are family packs of chicken, steak, or fish and larger bags of potatoes and frozen vegetables. Before you shop, remember to check if you have enough freezer space.

**5. Buy in Season:** Buying fruits and vegetables in season can lower the cost and add to the freshness! If you are not going to use them all right away, buy some that still need time to ripen.

**6. Convenience Costs...Back to the Basics:** Convenience foods like frozen dinners, pre-cut vegetables, and instant rice, oatmeal or grits will cost you more than if you were to make them from scratch. Take the time to prepare your own—and save!

**7. Easy on Your Wallet:** Certain foods are typically low-cost options all year round. Try beans for a less expensive protein food. For vegetables, buy carrots, greens, or potatoes. As for fruits, apples and bananas are good choices.

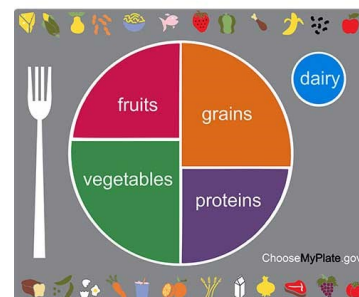
es.

**8. Cook Once...Eat all Week:** Prepare a large batch of favorite recipes on your day off (double or triple the recipe). Freeze in individual containers. Use them throughout the week and you won't have to spend money on take-out meals.

**9. Get Your Creative Juices Flowing:** Spice up your leftovers—use them in new ways. For example, try leftover chicken in a stir-fry or over a garden salad, or to make chicken chili. Remember, throwing away food is throwing away your money!

**10. Eating Out:** Restaurants can be expensive. Save money by getting the early bird special, going out for lunch instead of dinner, or looking for "2 for 1" deals. Stick to water instead of ordering other beverages, which add to the bill.

*This article and more helpful healthy eating resources can be found at:*  
[www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov)



*Urbana Park District staff (thanks to their wellness coordinator Mike Iorio) started their own healthy vending cove.*

## Illinois Healthy Worksite Designation

The Illinois Healthy Worksite Designation has just been released! This three-year designation includes three levels of recognition - Gold, Silver, and Bronze. The criteria for the employer designations are:

### Bronze

1. Actively promote and support healthy nutrition.
2. Provide and encourage

opportunities for physical activity at work.

### Silver

3. Develop a 12-month Health & Wellness Calendar and an ongoing communication plan to promote employee health and well-being throughout the year.

4. Demonstrate a commitment to employee health and wellbeing by making it part

of the organization's mission statement, goals and operations.

### Gold

5. Develop lifestyle and disease management strategies and measure their success annually.

Work with the Champaign-Urbana Public Health District to get your workplace recognized as a healthy worksite!

### *Amazing Challenge: Continued from page 1*

may allow us to pay the registration costs for your employees.

**Step 2:** We will help you create an website administrative account for your worksite.

**Step 3:** Have employees log in to the challenge website and

form teams.

**Step 4:** Have fun and increase the health of your workplace!

### **Why should I join?**

This program is inexpensive, accessible, and effective. The online wellness portal is easy

to use, and gives participants the ability to track their own progress.

### **Who else is participating?**

In the Champaign-Urbana area, some of the challenge participants include:

Champaign-Urbana Public

Health District, Parkland Community College, Champaign County, Carrie-Busey Elementary School, Unity West Elementary School, the City of Urbana, the Developmental Services Center, and Frasca International.

For more information see:  
[www.wechoosehealth365.org](http://www.wechoosehealth365.org).



*Parkland employees kick off the Amazing Challenge, January 2014*

## Champaign-Urbana Public Health District

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**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

### Champaign-Urbana Public Health District

C-UPHD partners with Champaign County employers to improve worksite wellness. If you are interested in learning more, contact Tara McCauley, Special Projects Coordinator, in the Division of Wellness and Health Promotion at C-UPHD.

*C-UPHD's Mission: To improve the health, safety and well-being of the community through prevention, education, collaboration, and regulation.*

## Women Out Walking

Starting in April 2014, C-UPHD is hosting a Women Out Walking 12 week walking challenge for women of all ages. Any team of 4-6 women is encouraged to participate.

Participants will receive a step counter, win prizes for weekly challenges, and have special access to local walking tracks. Events will be organized for WOW participants throughout

the challenge.

There is a \$5 fee. To register, visit:

[www.c-uphd.org/women-out-walking-registration.html](http://www.c-uphd.org/women-out-walking-registration.html)



### Champaign County Worksites: Continued from page 1

teachers posted pictures of themselves with their wellness goals written below around the school throughout the month of February.

Wellness committees are an excellent way to have champions plan healthy activities that fit for your worksite. Make sure your committee is representative of the workforce (different sites, job titles, etc.).

#### Host a Workshop

Workshops are an inexpensive way to provide health information to employees. Before the holidays last year, the Chamber of Commerce hosted a lunch-and-learn on staying healthy during the holidays. The workshop provided tips on avoiding

overeating and staying active, even while visiting family out of town.

Find opportunities to host educational workshops for your worksite. There are many local resources available for low or no cost lunch-and-learns.

#### Team Up With an Organizational Partner

A number of local organizations have given their employees additional opportunities to increase their wellness by partnering with

a business in the area. The Urbana Park District and Carle Hospital have a partnership that allows UPD employees to use Carle's fitness facilities, and Carle employees to use UPD's meeting space.

#### Provide Healthy Food at Work

Removing unhealthy vending food and serving healthy

snacks at work functions are an easy and important way to improve employees' diets. Unity West Elementary School serves healthy snacks at their staff



*City of Urbana staff had a luau lunch to kick off the Amazing Challenge.*

meetings, and sweets are kept to small portions. Carrie Busey School got rid of their vending machines completely. The Regional Planning Commission plans to label their healthier vending food with "healthy option" stickers. And Urbana Park District staff just started their own healthy vending cove.

#### Have Fun!

The City of Urbana held an employee luau kick-off for the Amazing Challenge, complete with decorations and snacks. The theme was an escape from the winter cold.

#### C-UPHD Can Help

Contact C-UPHD if you would like assistance with building your wellness program!